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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

- 1-8. (Canceled)
9. (Currently Amended): A clamping apparatus for electrically connecting at least a first ground wire to a grounding member, the clamping apparatus comprising:

a bottom clamping member comprising a bottom medial portion and first and second threaded holes on first and second sides of the bottom medial portion for accepting first and second screws, respectively;

a top clamping member cooperating with the bottom clamping member and comprising a top medial portion aligned to cooperate with the bottom medial portion and corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top medial portion that correspond to the first and second threaded holes; and

a trough comprising a base wall and a first and second side wall, the trough base wall being attached to the top medial portion of the top clamping member on a side opposite the bottom clamping member, the first side_wall having a threaded hole and a set screw adapted to matingly engage the threaded hole and to tighten against the second side_wall, wherein the trough is arranged with an opening between the first and second side_wall,

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wherein the set screw is positioned such that when the first ground wire is positioned in the trough, the set screw can be tightened to apply pressure so that the first ground wire is secured between the set screw and the second side_wall and the set screw extends outside the trough along an axis that intersects at least substantially perpendicularly with an axis of the first screw at a point above the first screw ~~to prevent the removal of one of the first and second screws.~~

10. (Canceled)
11. (Previously Presented): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top medial portion are slightly larger in diameter than the threaded holes to allow a screw to pass through each hole in the top clamping member and thread into the corresponding threaded hole in the bottom clamping member, thereby providing a clamping action around the ground member between the top and bottom clamping members when the screws are tightened.
12. (Previously Presented): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the trough opening is arranged so that the first ground wire can be laid-in the trough at some intermediate point on the ground wire.
13. (Previously Presented): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein one or both of the top and bottom medial portions are crowned in a direction away from the respective other medial portion to create an opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.

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14. (Previously Presented): The clamping apparatus of claim 13, wherein one or both of the crowned medial portion(s) has a serrated surface within the opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.
15. (Previously Presented): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the set screw has a rounded end for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire.
16. (Currently Amended): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the set screw further includes a sliding wedge affixed to an end of the set screw, the wedge adapted to move through the trough as the set screw is tightened and to engage the first ground wire for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire in cooperation with the second side_wall.
17. (Currently Amended): The clamping apparatus of claim 9, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate an additional second ground wire laid-in along side the first ground wire in the trough, said first and second ground wires being mechanically and electrically connected by the clamping pressure of the set screw.

Please add the following new claims:

18. (New): A clamping apparatus for electrically connecting at least a first ground wire to a grounding member, the clamping apparatus comprising:

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a bottom clamping member comprising a bottom medial portion and first and second threaded holes on first and second sides of the bottom medial portion for accepting first and second screws, respectively;

a top clamping member cooperating with the bottom clamping member and comprising a top medial portion aligned to cooperate with the bottom medial portion and corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top medial portion that correspond to the first and second threaded holes; and

a trough comprising a base wall and a first and second side wall, the trough base wall being attached to the top medial portion of the top clamping member on a side opposite the bottom clamping member and arranged with an opening between the first and second side wall, and

a threaded hole through the first side wall adapted to matingly engage a set screw positioned along a first axis that intersects at least substantially perpendicularly with a second axis of the first screw at a point above the first screw.

19. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the corresponding first and second holes on first and second sides, respectively, of the top medial portion are slightly larger in diameter than the threaded holes to allow a screw to pass through each hole in the top clamping member and thread into the corresponding threaded hole in the bottom clamping member, thereby

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providing a clamping action around the ground member between the top and bottom clamping members when the screws are tightened.

20. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the trough opening is arranged so that the first ground wire can be laid-in the trough at an intermediate point on the ground wire.
21. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate the first ground wire and a second ground wire laid-in along side the first ground wire in the trough.
22. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein one or both of the top and bottom medial portions are crowned in a direction away from the respective other medial portion to create an opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.
23. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein one or both of the crowned medial portion(s) has a serrated surface within the opening between the top and bottom clamping members for accommodating the grounding member.
24. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a set screw, wherein the set screw, as positioned along the first axis, can be tightened to apply clamping pressure to secure the first ground wire in the trough between the set screw and the second side wall.
25. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the set screw has a rounded end for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire.

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26. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the set screw further includes a sliding wedge affixed to an end of the set screw, the wedge adapted to move through the trough as the set screw is tightened and to engage the first ground wire for applying clamping pressure against the first ground wire in cooperation with the second side wall.
27. (New): The clamping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the trough is adapted to accommodate an additional second ground wire laid-in along side the first ground wire in the trough, the first and second ground wires being electrically connected by the clamping pressure of the set screw.